. . . His Road's His Own

BENEVOLENT DESPOT

By Eileen Learoyd

FOR SIX MONTHS, while waiting for her to be completed, he attended a nautical school and obtained a certificate to run a yacht up to 50 tons in Hong Kong waters.

He was soon dubbed "captain" and the title has stuck. Unfortunately, his "Discovery I" was wrecked in the Straits in 1950.

Capt. Beaumont also owns property on other islands. In 1918 he bought 513 acres of waterfront on Bedwell Harbor, South Pender Island, and still has a good part of it.

The "island king" comes by his love of islands and the sea honestly. He is related to a host of island-owners, admirals, and ordinary non-island-owning land-owners.

His grandfather eight "greats" back was Sir Donald Macdonald, First Baronet of Sleat, Isle of Skye (oldest baronetcy in Scotland) and the owner of some 200,000 acres in North and South Uist.

His great-great-grandfather, Lieut-Gen. Lord Macdonald, Third Baron, 11th Baronet and 18th Chief of Sleat, lived in Armadale Castle and married Louise Maria, daughter of the Duke of Gloucester. This union did nothing to diminish the family's land-owning potential. Their son, Gen. James Macdonald, was chosen to be companion to the young Prince George of Cambridge, later Duke of Cambridge and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. Macdonald was his equerry for 40 years.

Capt. Beaumont, youngest son of Lieut.-Col. G. Wentworth Beaumont, was born at 34 Portmand Square, London, at the town house of his grandfather, Sir Edward Blackett, Sixth Bart.

Meanwhile his aunt, Averil Beaumont, married Lord Swansea, then copper king of the world. There were already mines in the family, as his great-grandfather, Godfrey Wentworth Beaumont, owned an undisclosed number of lead mines.

Beaumont went to St. Paul's prep school, London, boarding school at Hawtrey's, Windsor, had two years at the Royal College of Science and three years at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

COLLEGE OARSMAN

He is proud of winning his college sculls there in 1901 and, due to the leg injury he had at school, he found boating one of his happiest lifetime jobs. He has owned 25 boats of all sizes.

He once rowed 620 miles down the Danube in 12 days in a 26-foot 16-inch wide shell. He sculled down the River Shannon to Limerick. Another time with a young friend he paddled a Peterborough canoe 1,200 miles, travelling from Switzerland by way of the Rhine and other rivers to the North Sea.

AMONG OTHER adventures he rode across the Sahara desert, and had a 35,000-mile trip around the world when he was just 16.

Another time he lived six months in Australia with his cousin, the Earl of Hopetoun. Hopetoun was Governor of the State of Victoria afterwards first Governor-General of Australia, later Marquis of Linlithgow and Viceroy of India.

He once went, as a boy, for a cruise in the destroyer HMS Victory. At that time his uncle, Philip Henry Collingwood Blackett, was first lieutenant of the destroyer.

"After that," said Capt. Beaumont, "my uncle married the daughter of Lord Fisher, then First Sea Lord. He got along rather well in the navy and finished his career an admiral."

"I had also wanted a naval career. My uncle, Rear Admiral John Crawford Wilson, and another uncle, Admiral of the Fleet the Hon. Sir Charles Elliot, had nominated me, but my bad leg stopped it. Elliot was the son of the Earl of Minto, a Lord of the Admiralty and uncle of the Earl of Minto, who was Governor-General of Canada and immediately afterward Viceroy of India. They all had some influence on my decision to come to Canada."

Typical of the wind-blown island's scenery is this tree-girt bay, with the tide lapping and the driftwood from a century of storms drying in the springtime sun. With "Capt." Beaumont is the author of this article, Eileen Learoyd.

To Canada he brought his wife, Constance Ida Hay Currie (Glyn Mills & Currie, bankers) whose father was the British Consul at Nice.

Mrs. Beaumont died in 1952, and apart from winter trips to the Continent and steady throngs of visitors, her great joy was her 1½-acre garden.

In spite of the loss of his wife, Capt. Beaumont could hardly be called a lonely man, for he has shared his island with so many thousands that he has a multitude of friends. Helping him on Discovery he has three men—Otto Watilzner, 21-year-old Hungarian from Budapest, who incidentally holds a B.C. swimming championship; Murray Alexander from Campo Bello, and John Hamilton.

From his living-room window he sees a magnificent sweep of uninterrupted reef and ocean straight across to Mount Rainier, 125 miles away.

Several score sheep and lambs owned by Indians gambol about like Rocky Mountain goats and keep the grass looking like a bowling green.

The wild parts of the island are left wild. The green wood, dripping with moss, is splashed with the red of arbutus. Parts of "Beaumont Road" are jungle-dark, lined with trees of cathedral stature—parts are rock barren.

When Capt. Beaumont gets into his boat he usually heads for the Yacht Club and thence to the rooms he keeps at the Union Club, as he spends two or three nights a week in town.

He chose the rooms many years ago for the view—of the harbor, the ocean—and ships.